

HEALTH
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Council Chambers,
GOSFORTH.
August, 1943.

To the Chairman and Members of the
Gosforth Urban District Council.

Gentlemen,

In accordance with the Ministry of Health Circular No. 2773 I beg to submit a very brief interim report on the health of the District during the year 1942; some details of the sanitary circumstances of the area are given in the Senior Sanitary Inspector's Report which is presented herewith.

The official statistics furnished by the Registrar-General are used throughout the report; in all cases, where numbers are stated, the comparative figures for 1941 will be inserted in brackets.

POPULATION.

The estimated civilian population at mid year 1942 was 20,380 (20,590) - a further slight decrease.

BIRTHS.

294 (239) live births and 12 (7) still births were registered during the year; the birth rate was 14.4 (11.2) compared with 15.8 (14.2) for England and Wales.

Again there were no maternal deaths.

INFANT MORTALITY.

4 (12) deaths of infants under one year of age were reported giving a rate of 13.6 (50.2) per thousand live births; the corresponding figure for England and Wales was 49 (59).

DEATHS.

There were 193 (206) deaths from all causes at all ages; the death rate was 9.47 (10.0) per thousand per annum against a rate of 11.6 (12.9) for England and Wales.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES.

Apart from tuberculosis 663 (502) notifications were received - the vast majority were in respect of minor illness such as Measles, Whooping Cough and Chicken Pox

but 82 (53) cases of Dysentery, of a mild type, were reported of which all except one occurred in the City Mental Hospital at Coxlodge.

23 (15) cases of Scarlet Fever and 10 (9) cases of Diphtheria, including one non-civilian, were notified during the year - the high percentage of cases removed to hospital was maintained; four of the notified cases of Diphtheria had been immunised.

During the year 620 (1400) children were immunised by General Practitioners and 289 (699) at the Welfare Centre - a total of 909 (2099); these figures include a small proportion of children residing outside the area who attend school in Gosforth.

6 (10) deaths were attributed to Pneumonia but none to Cerebro Spinal Fever, Scarlet Fever, Whooping Cough or Measles; there was one transferred death from Diphtheria of a girl aged 8 years who had been evacuated to Alnwick and had not been immunised.

TUBERCULOSIS.

22 (18) new cases of Tuberculosis were notified and there were three 'transfers' from other districts; 6 (11) deaths occurred.

Pulmonary Tuberculosis (Consumption) accounted for 18 of the 22 new notifications and 5 of the six deaths.

The total number of 'live' cases on the register at the end of the year was 101 (82) - of these 73 (57) were pulmonary cases and 28 (25) non-pulmonary.

CHILD WELFARE.

1918 (2277) domiciliary visits were paid by the Health Visitor and 146 (146) Child Welfare Sessions were held at the Centre, at which the total number of attendances was 8016 (7628) by 1023 (1235) individuals of whom 364 (400) were 'new' children; in addition 1123 (1193) interviews were granted to parents at the office.

The value of Milk etc., sold at cost price at the Centre showed an increase of nearly 90%.

INFANT LIFE PROTECTION. (Children & Young Persons Act 1932 - Part 5).

The Health Visitor is the Inspector under this Act; there were no children on the register at the end of the year.

ANTE-NATAL AND POST-NATAL CLINICS.

104 (96) sessions were held at the Centre at which a total of 903 (872) attendances were registered; of these 169 (216) were Ante-natal first visits and 106 (82) Post-natal first visits.

DENTAL CLINIC.

This clinic has now been established for 11 years. During the past year 26 (25) sessions were held; and 63 (90) children had general anaesthetics administered for multiple extractions and minor operative treatment. The total attendances numbered 189 and twenty Ante-Natal patients received treatment for the relief of pain or for oral sepsis.

GENERAL REMARKS.

The health of the community during the third year of war was remarkably good - the birth rate was up, the death rate down, the number of deaths from tuberculosis practically halved and the infant mortality rate reached the phenomenally low figure of 13.6 per thousand births.

There were only 4 infant deaths, 2 as a result of premature birth and one following an operation for a congenital abnormality - all three died within 2 days of birth; the fourth death occurred at the age of 4 weeks from broncho-pneumonia.

In addition there were no maternal deaths and the credit for this very satisfactory state of affairs must go to the staff of the Maternity and Child Welfare Centre, whose devotion to duty has earned for them the approval and approbation of all concerned.

No effort has been spared to get every child in the district protected against Diphtheria; it is known that a few parents still refuse to allow their children to have the benefit of this valuable preventive measure but judging from the actual number of children known to have been 'inoculated' we believe that at least 93% of the children between 1 and 5 years of age and 96% of those between 5 and 15 had been immunised by the end of the year.

In Gosforth as elsewhere there was an increase in the incidence of Scabies and a clinic for diagnosis and treatment was instituted at the Sanderson First Aid Post in February 1942; during the year 228 children and 103 adults attended and a total of 1539 treatments were given.

It affords me great pleasure to pay tribute to all those who have assisted in various ways - the staffs at the Welfare Centre, Sanderson Hospital First Aid Post and the Health Department, and the general practitioners for their services at the clinic and in connection with the Anti-diphtheria Immunisation Campaign in which Sister Kirby also rendered valuable help.

Of Mr. Combey's assistance I cannot speak too highly - it was largely due to his efforts that the Immunisation and Scabies 'drives' achieved such an outstanding measure of success.

In conclusion I am glad to take this opportunity of thanking all the members of the Council for their constant support and kind consideration.

Yours faithfully,

W.H. DICKINSON,

Medical Officer of Health.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SENIOR SANITARY INSPECTOR.

To the Medical Officer of Health.

Dear Sir,

I have pleasure in submitting brief particulars of the work of my Department for the year ending 31st December, 1942.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

No changes have taken place in connection with the water supply, drainage and sewerage or condition of rivers and streams during the year. The Fawdon Farm drainage outlet remains unsatisfactory, although some improvement has taken place in the condition of the effluent from the City Sewage Works at Fawdon.

COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL OF REFUSE.

The collection system organised during the year 1941 was continued with success during the year, there being a weekly collection of refuse between Monday and Wednesday, and of salvage material between Wednesday and Saturday, throughout the district. In the Coxlodge mining village area it was still necessary to collect refuse twice per week owing to the continued high percentage of ash and coal dross in the refuse.

Vehicles.

Opportunity was taken during the year to thoroughly overhaul the fleet of vehicles possessed by the Department, and although this caused considerable expense it was felt to be a reasonable safeguard for the future. Permission was obtained from the Ministry of War Transport to purchase a new Karrier Bantam Vehicle, as a replacement for one of the ten year old Vulcan lorries of the open type. The replaced vehicle will be utilised for spare parts as required, for the remaining Vulcan.

It was possible during the year to weigh refuse loads at intervals of a fortnight, and from the weights noted, averages were calculated. It was estimated that 5157 tons of refuse were collected from all premises in the district during the year, this being a slight reduction on the amount collected during 1941 (5175) tons. 3791 tons 10 cwts were disposed of by controlled tipping at the Brunton Quarry, 1358 tons 10 cwts were/

delivered to farms, market gardens, and allotments, the remaining 8 tons being disposed of by tipping at the Regent Pit Depot. It was pleasing to note the increased use by farmers and gardeners of certain of the refuse collected, as this materially reduced transport and so helped to save petrol, tyres, etc. The average amount of refuse (excluding salvage) collected during the year was: 257.5 tons per thousand of the population, and .775 tons per premises.

Having regard to the mildness of the winter and fuel economy it was hoped that a considerable reduction would occur in the quantity of refuse to be collected but, rather surprisingly, this was not the case. The character of the refuse continued to improve in that it was principally composed of ash and coal dross, the latter being fairly heavy at times, but in the case of miner's dwellings a considerable cinder content was noted. The cleaner condition of the refuse is most certainly due to the fact that the public are now salvage minded.

SALVAGE.

The district continued to show consistently high average figures in the Ministry of Supply Monthly Returns, as the public regularly take advantage of the special weekly salvage collection throughout the district, and more than 772 tons of material were salvaged during the financial year ending March, 1943, an increase of 100 tons on the previous year's figures. The Salvage Income during the year ending 31st March, 1943, was £2448 2s. 10d., being over £500 more than for the previous year. Additional income from special refuse collection in the district was £118 5s. 5d.

GENERAL INSPECTION OF PREMISES.

The number of visits carried out during the year was 6650 including 5686 re public health and housing matters, 401 re infectious diseases and disinfections, 60 visits re scabies, 20 visits to verminous premises, 222 visits to food premises, 54 visits in connection with service billets and Civil Defence matters, and 212 visits with regard to collection and disposal of refuse and salvage. There were also 25 drain tests carried out during the year.

In connection with the above visits, 189 informal notices were served during the year relating to 251 defects or nuisances of various kinds. No formal notices were served under the Public Health or Housing Acts.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

A. DAIRIES, COWSHEDS AND MILK SHOPS.

The register showed two cowkeepers who were also retailers of milk in the district at the end of the year, and the number of cows kept was approximately 150, the great majority being those of the T.T. herd at the Red House Farm, Fawdon. Apart from the two cowkeepers there are only two premises in the district where milk is bottled, and in only one of the four premises concerned is there provided satisfactory steam sterilisation apparatus. Towards the end of the year I was informed that some progress had been made in connection with the rationalisation of milk deliveries throughout the district, and this should have the effect of reducing the number of milk retailers in the Gosforth area.

(i) It was not found necessary to serve any notices during the year in connection with the cowkeepers premises which were maintained in quite good condition,

(ii) Fifty-one samples of milk were taken for examination at the County Laboratory, and the following were the results:-

Test used.	Grade of Milk.	No. of samples examined.	No. found Satisfactory.	Unsatisfactory.
Colliform	Ungraded	13	9	4
"	Accredited	4	4	0
"	"T.T."	4	3	1
Methylene Blue Reduction	Ungraded	21	15	6
	Accredited	11	7	4
	"T.T."	10	6	4
Plate Count.	Pasteurised.	7	6	1
B. Tuberculosis	Ungraded	10	6	4
	Accredited	2	2	
	"T.T."	1	1	

There appears to have been some improvement in the general quality of the milk samples during the year as compared with that of the of the previous year. The examination of samples for B. tuberculosis, however, proved rather disturbing, there being four positive samples out of ten ungraded milk samples taken. The/

graded milk proved satisfactory, while no requests were made for the examination of pasteurised milk for B. tuberculosis owing to the impossibility of tracing the source of such infection in the bulk samples. Action was taken by the County Council and Ministry of Agriculture in connection with the supplies found to contain B. tuberculosis.

(iii) The following licences for the sale of graded milk in the district were issued:-

To sell Tuberculin Tested milk	3
To sell Accredited milk	1 "
To sell Pasteurised milk (from vehicles)	1

B. REGISTRATION OF PREMISES (Food and Drugs Act 1938, Section 14).

No additional registrations were granted during the year under the above section, and the number remained at 45. The general standard of food premises throughout the district remained good, but a considerable amount of nuisance by rat infestations was noticeable during the year and constant efforts were made to assist and advise where infestations were found.

C. SLAUGHTER HOUSE, RETAIL MEAT SHOPS, etc.,

The two small slaughter houses were again licensed during the year although there appears little hope of them ever being used owing to the centralisation of slaughter generally throughout the County. One building continued to be used as a meat distributing centre for the twenty-one retail meat shops in the district, and visits were paid to all these premises. A considerable quantity of food was condemned as unfit for human consumption but it was possible in most cases to salvage the material for pig food or other purposes, the principal items being 404 canned goods, 100 lbs. beef, 41 lbs. cheese, and 25 lbs. of fruit.

HOUSING.

No action was taken during the year under the Housing Act, but the provisions of the Public Health Act were found useful for dealing with urgent matters in connection with housing conditions and despite the shortage of labour and materials it was pleasing to note that most owners made efforts to deal as quickly as possible with outstanding repairs. No formal steps were taken in connection with overcrowding or housing, but there remains a considerable unfulfilled demand for

dwelling houses in this district. There exist in the district a number of dwelling houses which are in a very poor condition and constantly deteriorating, and it will be necessary to deal with these premises as soon as possible after the war.

STAFF.

I would again pay tribute to the loyalty of the staff, including Mr. Liddle, - my Assistant Inspector, and Mr. Smith the Cleansing Foreman. The excellent work of the Department could not be maintained without constant efforts by all concerned.

Yours faithfully,

W. COMBEY,

Senior Sanitary Inspector,
Salvage Officer.

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